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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

IDENTITY, SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-CONCEPT UPON RETIREMENT FROM ELITE LEVEL SPORT

BY

KAREN ADELE SHAFFER

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING 1990

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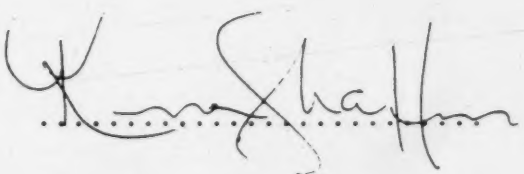

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled IDENTITY, SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-CONCEPT UPON RETIREMENT FROM ELITE LEVEL SPORT submitted by KAREN ADELE SHAFFER in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

R.K. Alderman.....
Supervisor

J.M. Hoag.....

.....

Date: August 19, 1989.... .....

DEDICATION

To my husband, Joseph Shaffer, for his ongoing support of my aspirations.
To my family, who have always been there for me.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships between identity, self-esteem, self-concept and the retirement of the elite level amateur athlete. A total of 34 competitive and 38 retired nationally ranked athletes were interviewed.

The subscales of identity and self-esteem were of primary focus for this study because of their key role in the self-evaluation of athletes upon retirement.

The results from the TSCS scores revealed that on average, retired athletes scored higher in all areas, including identity and self-esteem scales, than did competitive athletes. This group is in an environment that measures their self-worth by previous performances and comparisons to other athletes. It may contribute significantly to fluctuating and even lower identity and self-esteem scores in the competitive group. Successful retired athletes, on the other hand, have left the judgmental environment of competitive sport. They, therefore, tend to maintain fairly stable levels of identity, self-esteem and global self-concept.

Within the competitive group only, results showed that athletes' identity and self-esteem did not differ regardless of the amount of time since achieving a national ranking. Both newly ranked athletes and seasoned veterans showed

similar scores. Likewise, the retired group showed no difference in identity and self-esteem scores regardless of the amount of time since their retirement.

Retired athletes were categorized into groups depending on whether or not they remained active in their sport, e.g. volunteer work or coaching. Results indicated that levels of identity and self-esteem were not dependant on whether the athletes remained in their sport or moved on to a new interest.

Self-reports indicated that competitive athletes would not be responsive to pre-retirement planning yet they viewed their sporting career realistically and maintained outside interests. Retired athletes indicated that they were happier at the time of the interview than when they were athletes and urged competitive athletes to realistically evaluate their potential and plan their post-retirement goals.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Nature of the Problem

Over recent years, amateur sport has evolved from a pleasure activity to big business. Media, corporate sponsors and associations spend millions of dollars annually to improve performances and in turn associate their product with elitism. Increases in extrinsic rewards such as endorsements, scholarships and publicity enhance motivation for achievement (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). No longer is it possible for athletes to extend themselves with minimum effort and reap rewards because as the levels of performance expectancy rise, so do the demands. Athletes are now required to dedicate their entire existences, both physically and psychologically, to their chosen fields of expertise. Often, an unfortunate repercussion of this dedication to excellence is neglect of other accepted commitments of life such as education, work and personal relationships (Werthner & Orlick, 1981; Broom, 1981). Most of the returns for these years of commitment are financially minimal as well as leaving athletics with an uncertain

future (Werthner & Orlick, 1981; Broom, 1981; Orlick, 1980).

According to Erikson (1968), the development of one's identity occurs predominantly during the adolescence and young adulthood stages. This is partially achieved through the acquisition of confidence and purpose in life. Athletes develop confidence and purpose through sport and therefore athletic identities become the predominant source of self-definition (Botterill, 1981; Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). At the peak of one's career, this consequence becomes an asset for those dedicated to the pursuit of excellence. Unfortunately many neglect to consider athletic aspirations as short term and therefore preparations for retirement are neglected until it is too late. As a result, the termination of individuals' athletic careers are likely to create major life crises; a state of confusion and lack of purposefulness (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). In their perception, they have become a "nobody" overnight (McLaughlin, 1981).

The direct effects of this "identity crisis" is a decline in self-esteem (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). Other psychological effects resulting from this transition phase can even be related to experiencing a major loss such as a death in the family. The depression, anger and anxiety due to lack of direction, lack of income and so forth, are all effects directly related to retirement from sport (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). From a psychological perspective, retirement

introduces the threat of an undefined identity and decline in self-esteem.

In summary, retirement from elite sport introduces the threat of an undefined identity, a decrease in self- esteem due to the elimination of one's purpose in life. Unfortunately coaches, sports associations, corporate sponsors and athletes alike feel that focusing on ways to effectively deal with this phase is not productive in a schedule directed toward peak performance.

B. Need and Purpose for the Study

As our North American society continues to increase its demands and standards for peak performances, the actual outcomes may be the premature retirement of many high performance athletes. Government, corporate sponsors and the media, who benefit from the accomplishments of athletes, should be made aware of the repercussions that could potentially destroy promising and contributing persons in our society. Presently, many athletes are left with a lack of appropriate coping skills, education and/or the lack of desire to start at the bottom in some other pursuit. Therefore, studies in this area should lend themselves to developing recommendations to aid in solving this problem (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981; Botterill, 1981).

It is apparent from the literature that there is a need

to establish to what degree or intensity this identity crisis occurs. This can be accomplished through a comparison of experiences between currently retired and currently competitive athletes. From such a comparison, direct psychological effects, such as a loss of identity or a lowering in self-esteem, can be examined. If there is a decrease of self-esteem due to a non-defined identity, knowledge about these two effects of retirement from elite level sport can generate the development of more effective coping strategies. Hopefully such a development would decrease the number of athletes with ineffective coping skills. Also, it would attempt to educate athletes, coaches, sports psychologists and so forth, to better service athletes presently experiencing this transition phase.

The subscales of identity and self-esteem were specifically selected for investigating the inter-correlations because of their predominant role involved in the self-definition and self-evaluation of the successful athlete. Therefore, upon retirement, it is suspected that these two factors would in turn, suffer a decrease. The primary purpose of this exploratory study is to establish whether or not athletes experience a decline in identity, self-esteem and overall self-concept upon retirement from elite level amateur sport.

C. Definitions

(a) Amateur. Where amateur sport may have previously inferred participation without monetary reward, it now refers to any sport that does not issue a regular salary to athletes (excluding government support). Amateur sports in Canada which are eligible to have international representation have a national sport governing body headed by Sport Canada.

(b) Elite. Though defined (Webster, 1987) as "the best part of society (ie: a choice or select body), for the purpose of this study, "elite' will refer to the best amateur athletes in Canada in their chosen discipline--national team or ranked in the top ten in Canada.

(c) Retirement. This term has the connotation of reaching the end of one's useful working career (Murgatroyd & Woolfe, 1982). However, when referring to retirement from sport, individuals must realize that this is a loss or change that occurs at a relatively early age, for example, middle to late twenties (age dependent on the sport).

According to Werthner & Orlick (1981), termination of athletic involvement should no longer be viewed as retirement from a job. Rather, a more realistic view of the end of an athletic career is the loss of a very important

relationship or a passage from one phase of life to another (transition).

(d) Identity. Personality includes many observable characteristics as well as self-perceptions. Phenomenological psychologists propose that individuals react to their phenomenal world in terms of this perception. It is the culmination of these perceptions that form self-esteem. Identity serves as an organizing function of all parts of themselves throughout the life-span and thus represents an integration process (Whitbourne & Weinstock, 1979). Essentially, identity refers to individuals' self-definition of "who they are".

Erikson (1968), proposed the development of the young adult's identity to be a conflict situation in which one must develop a meaningful role or purpose in life to exist in society. This stage of development is referred to as "identity vs identity confusion". This stage can indeed be confusing if a role is not identified and internalized. Identity therefore, refers to one's self-definitions and self-attributes in a variety of personal and interpersonal characteristics resulting in confidence and purpose in life.

(e) Self-Esteem. Coopersmith (1967) defines self-esteem as follows:

"the evaluation which the individual makes

> and customarily maintains with regards to himself" (pg. 4)

He further expands his remarks to say that self-esteem

> "expresses an attitude of self-approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy". (pg. 5)

(f) Self-Concept. Self-concept is defined by Rogers (1951) as:

> "an organized configuration of perceptions of the self which are admissable to awareness. It is composed of such elements as the perceptions of individuals' characteristics and abilities; the percepts and concepts of the self in relation to others and to the environments."(pg. 136)

Self-concept emerges as a result of individuals' experience with the environment. Research reveals that it can be formed by athletes' perceptions of their performances and experiences. Both definitions indicate that the self is comprised of more than one dimension and that it possesses perceptual and valuative components.

(g) Identity Crisis. According to Erikson (1968), "identity crisis" applies to anyone who experiences an undefined identity. This crisis may be encountered at any age and in a variety of situations, including athletes facing retirement

(Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). At this stage, situations and events which produce changes in the perception of the self that are sudden and rapid have profound effect. an example would be a career ending injury (Stevenson, 1981). While attempting to adjust to a new world in which the now ex-athletes must assimilate, they are caught in a social/cultural limbo without a clear personal identity (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981).

D. Hypotheses

The major hypotheses for this study will be limited to four important issues:

(1) Upon retirement, athletes experience a decline in both their identity, self-esteem and overall self-concept, and therefore, would be expected to score significantly lower on the TSCS than their competitive counterparts.

(2) Retired athletes would show an increase in both their identity and self-esteem as the amount of time increased from their initial retirement.

(3) Competitive athletes would show an increase in both their identity and self-esteem as the amount of time they were successful in their sport increases.

(4) For retired athletes, remaining in their sport in some capacity other than competitive would allow them to maintain the high levels of identity and self-esteem established as elite level athletes and therefore, decrease the impact of

retirement.

E. Limitations

To the knowledge of this researcher, no inventory had been specifically constructed to address the issues of self-concept, identity, and self-esteem upon retirement from elite level sport. As with all psychometrically-based research, the honesty of the participants was assumed. Finally, the interview required a retrospective accounting of experiences that was both subjective in nature and was open to distortions due to memory.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Over recent years, sports psychologists have become increasingly concerned with the traumatic repercussions that affect many elite level athletes following their decision to leave their sport. Concentrating on the literature arising from this transition phase, this review will examine its effects on identity and self-esteem.

This chapter presents a review of the literature subdivided as follows: (1) identity, (2) identity crisis, (3) self-concept,(4) self-esteem, (5) retirement from sport, (6) the effects of identity and self-esteem during the retirement phase, (7) implications and recommendations regarding this transition phase, and finally, (8) a literature review summary.

A. Identity

The importance of examining the effects of major life changes on identity, such as retirement from sport, has been frequently noted in the literature (Botterill, 1981; Ogilvie & Howe, 1981; Stevenson, 1981; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Allison, & Meyer, 1981) However, to attain a complete

understanding of the role of identity in sport, one must examine the background and theories of identity and the identity crisis in some detail.

According to Erikson (1968), identity is the property of individuals, not of a group or institution. Positive or negative, identity develops throughout childhood as a result of experiences and conflicts overcome at different stages of development.

> "Identity formation begins where the usefulness of identification ends. It arises from selective repudiation and mutual assimilation of childhood identifications and their absorption in a new configuration. This is dependant upon the process by which a society identifies individuals". (Erikson, 1968; in Santrock, 1988, pg. 589).

This statement implies that identity is formed through a subjective, experimental process by which the person must form mutual relationships with the social world and community. It is through these relationships that individuals can attempt to become productive, purposeful members of their society. This procedure may produce a great deal of confidence and personal self-worth or, if not successful, a lack of assuredness and cohesiveness (Santrock, 1988). This concept is of particular significance in the area of sport. In this case, individuals develop confidence and meaning through their achievements and therefore, through the years, establish their identity as "athletes".

In the field of identity development, James Marcia (1980), defines identity as:

> "Physical abilities, cognitive skills and social expectations that coincide to enable persons to sort through and synthesize their childhood identifications in order to construct viable pathways". (in Santrock, 1988; pg.590)

This view considers the holistic development of physical, psychological and social aspects as a combination to form individuals" identities.

Another view of identity centers on the question, "Who am I?" (Hollander, 1976), which emphasizes the process of self-discovery. Whereas Rogers (1951) emphasizes the importance of the movement toward self-consistency and congruity between the self and others' perceptions of them.

In summary, these and other theories of identity development support the view that individuals establish their identities through life experiences. Through these experiences, they find meaning in their existence, a place in their society, and establish "who" they are.

B. Identity Crisis

The theory of identity crisis is found predominantly in the work of Erikson (1968); specifically, during his theory's fifth stage of development referred to as identity vs. identity fusion (or diffusion). This stage is roughly associated with Freud's genital stage, centering on the

establishment of a stable personal identity. For Freud, the important part of identity formation resides in adolescents' resolution of sexual conflicts. Whereas for Erikson, the central ingredient is the establishment of a clear path toward a vocation - a selection of a job or an occupational role to aspire to. If individuals come through this period with a clearly selected role and knowledge that others in society can clearly identify this role, feelings of confidence and purposefulness emerge. If not, individuals may become confused and troubled (Santrock, 1988).

Those who are not successful in resolving this identity crisis becomes confused and suffer from what Erikson refers to as "identity confusion". This confusion may take one of two courses. (1) Individuals may withdraw by isolating themselves from peers/family or (2) may lose their own identity in that of a crowd (Erikson, 1968).

The theory of the identity crisis can be applied to anyone of any age who feels a loss of identification or self-image. This identity confusion suggests a breakdown in the person's time perspective, initiative, and ability to coordinate one's behavior toward future goals (Erikson, 1968).

Wheeler (in Crook, 1980), emphasized the importance of identity and implied a potential crisis in the following:

> "Identity is a coherent sense of self... it can survive major conflicts provided the sup-

> porting framework of life is stable, but not when that framework is lost." (pg.44)

Erikson (1968), refers to the possibility of identity confusion and suggests a breakdown in individuals' time perspective, initiative, and ability to coordinate behavior toward future goals.

Stevenson (1981) described the identity crisis as the following:

> "Situations and events which produce changes in the definition of the self that is relatively sudden and rapid and which the results are often profound." (pg. 192)

Such transformations may be quite dramatic and may cause severe confusion, uncertainty and stress for the individual.

In summary, "identity crisis" refers to the confusion and lack of direction individuals experience when their self-definition no longer seems accurate. This can be brought about by a number of different causes, however the results are the same. Individuals must begin to redefine themselves by establishing new directions and goals. Relating this to sport, when athletes retire, they must develop new identities in order to function effectively in the world outside of sport. This task becomes more difficult when there is a lack of preparation or when retirement is sudden, such as a career ending injury (Stevenson, 1981).

C. Self-Concept

The literature reveals that global self-concept is collection of individuals' attitudes, judgments and values held with respect to their behaviors, ability, body and worth as people (Battle, 1981). These perceptions of themselves influence the way people behave.

Self-concept, according to Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) in Battle (1981), state that self-concept can be described as being:

> (a) organized: Individuals' experiences constitute the data on which they base their perceptions of the self.
>
> (b) multifaceted: This includes dimensions of school, social acceptance, physical attractiveness, and ability in self-esteem (Jersild, 1952; Sears, 1963).
>
> (c) hierarchical: This may range from individual's experiences in particular situations to global self-concept.
>
> (d) stability: Self-concept tends to be stable and fairly resistant to change. That is to say that once established and differentiated, self-concept can be found highly correlated between one's self-esteem when it is examined from time to time over the years. (This concept is challenged when referring to an identity crisis).
>
> (e) developmental: Self-concept is developed in a fashion similar to the way individuals acquire personalities. (pg.22)

Self-concept includes an evaluative component that individuals, through maturation, learn to evaluate their performances in various situations and in response to differing stimuli. This involves an ongoing comparison

between the self and others, such as peers, parents and so on. Individuals, such as athletes, who evaluate their performances through the comparison of others may tend to perceive themselves negatively if the performance is less than perfect. This assumption is of particular importance as it demonstrates how athletes can formulate their identity based on performances. This, in turn would cause their self-esteem and overall self-worth to fluctuate with good and bad performances.

In summary, self-concept is composed of perceptions of individuals' characteristics and abilities. Although it may appear to fluctuate with various behaviors and feedback from the environment, global self-concept tends to remain fairly stable. Athletes are particularity vulnerable to fluctuation due to negative feedback since their abilities are constantly subject to performance evaluation.

D. Self-Esteem

Coopersmith (1967) states that self-esteem is:

> "a personal, subjective judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individuals hold toward themselves." (pg.4)

This perception of the self develops gradually, becoming more differentiated as one matures and interacts with significant others (Battle, 1981). If people approve, respect, and like the person, individuals therefore develop a sense of self-acceptance and respect for themselves and

others.

Self-esteem is associated significantly with personal satisfaction and effective functioning (Coopersmith, 1967). Studies reveal that individuals whose performances do not match their personal aspirations evaluate themselves as inferior, unsuccessful and unworthy, no matter how high their attainments (Coopersmith, 1967). This point directly parallels the observation pertaining to self-concept in that both appear to fluctuate with performance results.

Self-esteem may vary across different areas of experiences according to sex, age and other role-defining conditions (Coopersmith, 1967). In other words, it is conceivable that individuals may regard themselves as worthy athletes, moderate students and unworthy musicians. However, overall appraisal of abilities would presumably weigh these areas according to their subjective importance enabling individuals to arrive at a general level of self-esteem. It is thus hypothesized that athletes' self-esteem is based substantially on their achievement of athletic success. Yet, when away from the competitive environment, such as upon retirement, they still maintain general self-esteem of themselves as good people.

Examining a combination of theories summarized in Coopersmith (1967), the major factors of self-esteem are as follows:

(1) The amount of respectful, accepting, concerned treatment that individuals receive

from significant others in their life.

(2) The history of successes, status and position individuals attain in their life (success = recognition therefore related to status in the community).

(3) The experiences modified by the values and aspirations of the individuals.

(4) Individuals' manners of responding to devaluation against themselves. (pg. 37)

In summary, self-esteem is a subjective evaluative judgement of worthiness. Although the two appear to have many similarities, self-esteem and self-concept should not be confused. The major difference is that self-esteem is a quantitative subjective judgement, whereas self-concept is a qualitative evaluation.

E. Retirement from Sport

Retirement implies withdrawal from a social scene, which in general, carries with it both positive and negative connotations. It entitles individuals to more leisure time, yet it can also make someone feel useless and devalued with the social transportation from "known" to "unknown" (Hill & Lowe, 1984).

Retirement from amateur sport has not been considered problematic until very recently. This is due to the still prominent notion that participation in sport is a spare-time activity or hobby. For top level amateur athletes of today, however, retirement can be a very traumatic event (Broom, 1981).

In order to remain competitive, athletes are required to have total commitment, both physically and mentally. The ever increasing number of athletes who pursue their athletic career on a full-time basis in hopes of reaping the notoriety and financial rewards. Since acknowledgement of a life other than sport is minimal, retirement therefore, may come as a great shock to many athletes who are unprepared (Oglivie & Howe, 1981; Hill & Low, 1984). As well, athletes who reach the pinnacle of personal achievement early in life might have painful or traumatic retirement experience. Partly because no other activity will ensure social or personal esteem that sport did, therefore reduce the levels of successful adjustment (Harris & Eitzen, 1978).

Career termination from athletics can be attributed to a variety of reasons. It usually, however, involves at least one of three major factors. The first factor is the selection process that is encountered at every competitive level. Many athletes will choose retirement when they fail to make a team they have dedicated so much of their time towards achieving, such as the Olympic team. The second factor involves physiological changes that may begin to occur, thus requiring athletes to work harder as they get older. The presence of younger, faster and stronger athletes significantly increases the pressure on the aging competitor. The third and probably most common factor is athletic injury (Hill & Low, 1984). Reoccurring or

debilitating injuries can halt even the most promising career and leave negative repercussions, especially when the injury occurs suddenly.

Whatever causes the retirement, athletes' post retirement experiences will be dependent upon the degree to which they are prepared for their new life in the world outside of sport. A disadvantage that athletes have is that upon termination of their athletic careers, they may find themselves years behind in the workforce or in their own family life that their non-athletic peers (Hill & Lowe, 1984).

Although some pass through this phase with relative ease, others compare their experiences to the loss of a loved one. Stages of such a loss were first proposed by Kubler-Ross (1969) in her work titled "On Death and Dying". The stages are as follows: (1) denial and isolation; (2) anger; (3) bargaining; (4) depression; and (5) acceptance. These stages have been adapted to everything from age 65 retirement to spinal cord injury and amputation. They have also been adapted to the area of sports psychology in the form of three stages (1) shock and/or denial; (2) anger and/or depression; and (3) understanding and acceptance (Colgrove et al., 1976). Experts suggest that all athletes upon retirement experience these stages to varying degrees, prior to coming to terms with their decision (Botterill, 1981; Werthner & Orlick, 1981).

However, despite many researcher's early expectations, recent literature has concluded that the process of retirement is not nearly as traumatic as might have been expected (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Coakley, 1983; Allison & Meyer, 1984). Some studies have found high levels of life satisfaction among samples of former professional baseball and football players (Lerch, 1982; Rosenberg, 1981; Allison & Meyer, 1984). These results do not seem to support the negative view of sport disengagement, let alone suggest the frequent occurrence of something that might be best characterised as a social death (Curtis & Ennis, 1988). For many athletes, both professional and amateur, this time may be seen as time freed for the pursuit of other valued goals, without the heavy burden of training, and high performance demands (Coakley, 1983). In actual fact, there is no real evidence, comparative or not, of severe life adjustment problems after retirement (Curtis & Ennis, 1988). The "rebirth" theory (Coakley, 1983) implies that there is a reasonable clear cut change from past athletic careers to other roles (Allison & Meyer, 1984).

In summary, elite level sport now requires total dedication from athletes. Any preparation concerning retirement is seen as working against goals of performance (Werthner & Orlick, 1981). For this reason, many athletes do not address the issue of plans after retirement and therefore may encounter problems when their time does come.

Three factors are most prevalent when examining reasons for retirement. They are: (1) selection processes, (2) physiological changes, and (3) injury. For whatever reason, the period directly after leaving the sport is compared with the loss of a loved one. First determined by Kubler-Ross (1969), these stages of coping have been adapted to the world of sport. All athletes encounter these stages; however, the intensity and/or duration of these stages may vary considerably with the severity of the experience.
The trend of more current research suggests, however, that retirement from elite level sport is not as traumatic as once assumed (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Coakley, 1983; Curtis & Ennis, 1988). Athletes can end their successful career and begin a new one relatively unscathed by the major life change.

F. Role of Identity and Self-Esteem in Retirement from Sport

Termination of individuals' careers can potentially create a major life crisis for which athletes are poorly prepared. Whatever the cause, each individual faces a period of adjustment during the transition from athlete to ex-athlete.

With reference to Erikson's (1968) theory, athletes' "athletic" identity is reinforced to the point of excluding other facets of their personality and therefore feelings of

self-worth are conditional on the success or failure achieved through athletic performance (Oglivie & Howe, 1981). The more closely athletes identify with the sport, the more traumatic the identity crisis will be upon the termination of their careers. Prior to retirement however, positive self-concept and identity, elevated by successful athletic achievement, give rise to relatively high levels of self-esteem (Crooks, 1980).

Other current literature (Coakley, 1984; Allison & Meyer, 1984; Curtis & Ennis, 1988) however, reveals that many athletes indicate that their psychological reaction is "relief" (Greendorfer, & Blinde, 1985). With the end of their competitive careers comes the opportunity to pursue new sets of roles and experiences. Athletes report that they while they enjoyed their competitive careers, they see retirement as the end of the pressures (Allison & Meyer, 1984).

In summary, through time, athletes learn to identify themselves more with their sport and allow other roles to become secondary. Upon termination of their career, athletes must redefine their role in society. In other words, a new identity must be formulated. This transitional period can be very traumatic or relatively smooth. The eventual outcome is dependent on how well the athletes have prepared, both physically and mentally.

G. Implications and Recommendations Regarding the Transition Phase

The transition phase from athletes to ex-athletes may or may not be traumatic. Unfortunately, there is no short-term solution to improve the experience of retirement for those who do encounter problems. The only solution is to prepare and educate athletes for this potential crisis period. This would involve counselling, developing preparatory coping strategies, and allowing the athletes to have other important interests in their life other than their sport. An important change would be to make a distinction between sport being "an important thing" and sport being "the only thing". Elimination of the latter would probably alleviate much of the problem.

Svoboda & Vanek (1981) and Broom (1981) explain that the problem is not isolated to North America. The country given most of the credit for preventing or dealing with these problems is the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Early identification and support of talented young athletes does not seem to detract from their psychological growth and development in these early years. This can be attributed to (1) longer education, (2) counselling and (3) a continuing contribution to society, usually in the form of coaching, after their athletic career is over. The GDR also adopts gradual physical detraining (a preparatory process preceding retirement) program to ease the athletes into this

transition phase (Botterill, 1981).

Orlick (1981), has reported the need for better counselling, sensitivity, balance, planning, coordination, support and input from athletes (competitive and retired) (Level III Canadian Coaching Certification Theory Manual, 1981). It is presumed that these would lead to greater meaning, commitment and self-management skills on the part of the athletes.

Recommendations emphasizing the improvement of conditions surrounding retirement suggest an effective form of detraining (Botterill, 1981). The components of detraining would and should include the following: (1) athletes becoming more involved in coaching and learning their sport from a coaching perspective, (2) athletes being encouraged to use their sport expertise in academic pursuits, and (3) athletes developing other skills in the off season or in their spare time. Most of all it is important to remember that the development of the whole person is essential to be successful in life and not just the development of the athletic skills.

In summary, developing a training program that includes a component of preparation for retirement seems essential to alleviate the problems encountered during this difficult transition period. It is important for athletes to be reminded that they have, or should have, a life outside of their sport. If this is not emphasized, retirement could be

a very debilitating event.

H. Literature Review Summary

(1) Based on Erikson's research (1968), individuals' identities develope through self-definitions and self-attributing on a variety of personal and interpersonal characteristics.

(2) An identity crisis is encountered when individuals fail to clearly identify their roles and purpose in life.

(3) Global self-concept is a total collection of attitudes, judgments and values which individuals hold; how individuals perceive and evaluate themselves (Byrne, 1974).

(4) Self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes individuals hold towards themselves.

All dedicated athletes have a common commitment to fulfill a dream of excellence and/or success, yet these research findings lead to the following questions: (1) how much total commitment is required and (2) what are sport administrators prepared to do to help these individuals who have worked so hard to contribute the excellence in our country? Unfortunately, the present system helps only those performing at a high level, especially in the high profile sports and competitions such as the Olympic games. Those no longer competitive in a sport are quickly forgotten.

The research may differ on whether retirement from

elite level sport is traumatic, however, they do agree on one point. The implications and recommendations of published research emphasized that counselling, detraining and a holistic development of individuals' lives would assist in decreasing any negative experiences of during this transition phase (Werthner & Orlick, 1981; Botterill, 1981; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Hill & Lowe, 1984).

Although the review of literature reveals these trends, extensive investigation on this topic is still minimal. A standardized examination will be conducted to establish the actual state of identity and self-esteem in athletes by comparing currently competitive and currently retired athletes. Perhaps with more specific results, progress in eliminating these problems could be accelerated.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

A. Subjects

The respondents for the present study were comprised of n = 73 elite level athletes ("elite" as defined in the introduction), in which the group was divided into 2 sub-groups according to competitive status. For statistical comparisons, the group of currently competitive athletes (n = 35) were compared with the group of retired athletes (n = 38).

Subjects were selected according to the following criteria:

(1) Currently competitive individual sport athletes who had attained a position on a national team (therefore competitive at an international level) and/or had attained a national ranking of top ten or greater, compiled by the national sport governing body or one of its affiliates in their discipline. (2) Presently retired individual sport athletes who had attained a position on a national team and/or attained a national ranking of top ten or greater in

their chosen discipline. This criteria was established to ensure that the subjects participating in this study had dedicated a significant portion of their life to the attainment of this status. The respondents were volunteers and representative of a wide variety of sports.

B. Procedure

All subjects were administered the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS; Fitts, 1965). A description of this test is to follow. Following completion of the TSCS, within the same test session, subjects were given one of two self-administered questionnaires according to their competitive status (currently competitive or retired). The questionnaire, pertaining to retired athletes, dealt with their experiences during the transition from athletes to ex-athletes and post-retirement. The questionnaire completed by currently competitive athletes focused on anticipated experiences involving retirement from sport. Further explanation of these questionnaires is to follow. The final procedure involved a second administration of the TSCS, still within the one test session. This was done as a test of response reliability.

The TSCS (Fitts, 1965) is a 100 item, self-administered, 5 point Likert-type scale ("completely false" to "completely true") designed to measure one's self-concept. It yielded subscores on three internal and five external

dimensions of self-concept, including a total score reflecting the overall level of self-esteem as conducted by the total score of the TSCS. The three internal factors are "identity" ("what I am"), "self-satisfaction" (level of self-acceptance) and "behavior" (individuals' perceptions of their behaviors). The five external factors are "physical" (individuals' views of their bodies), "moral-ethical" (feelings of being a "good" or "bad" person), "personal self" (individuals' sense of personal worth), "family self" (individuals' feelings of worth and adequacy as family members) and "social self" (self as perceived in relation to others).

As described by Fitts (1965), norms for the TSCS were generated from a sample of 626 males and females aged 12-68 years of various races, levels of intelligence, and socio-economic status levels. In addition to Fitts'(1965) original test manual, a considerable number of reliability and validity studies have been summarized by Bentler (1977) in Buros 8th Mental Measurements Yearbook. Test-retest reliability for the subscales range from .74 to .92, with the overall test ("Total Positive" score) being .92 (Fitts, 1965). Internal consistency data have not been reported. With respect to validity, TSCS subscale scores correlate in the .50 to .70 range with several Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) scores (Fitts, 1965), and with the Taylor Anxiety Scales at r=-.70 for the Total Positive

TSCS score. Additional information on test validation is presented in Bentler (1977). It is important to note that there are two methods of scoring the TSCS. The "counseling form" as opposed to the "clinical form" was used in the present study. Both forms use exactly the same test booklet and test items. The differences between the forms center in the scoring and profiling system. The Counseling form is quicker and easier to score since it deals with fewer variables and scores, is appropriate for self interpretation and feedback to counselees, and requires less sophistication in psychometrics and psychopathology by the examiner (Fitts, 1965).

A Pearson-Product moment correlation was preformed between the pre- and post-test results of the TSCS in order to determine the strength between the two tests. Results indicated a very strong correlation and therefore only the pre-test results were reported in this study (Table I).

The second set of questionnaires were standardized interviews compiled by the author. One form was administered to currently competitive athletes and the other to retired athletes. The former was comprised of questions specific to perceived coping experiences with regards to retirement (Appendix C). The retired athlete form addressed athletic retirement experiences (Appendix C). Items on these two interviews were related to items on the TSCS concerning identity and self-esteem, with the exception

TABLE I

Pearson-Product Moment Correlations for Pre- and Post-Test Results of the TSCS

Competitive Group	
Physical Self r = .8855*	Critical Self r = .9245*
Moral/Ethical Self r = .8924*	Identity r = .9017*
Personal Self r = .9262*	Self-Satisfaction r =.9318*
Family Self r = .9912*	Behavior r = .9570*
Social Self r = .9389*	Total (Self-Esteem) r = .9710*
Retired Group	
Physical Self r = .8849*	Critical Self r = .9245*
Moral/Ethical Self r = .7795*	Identity r = .8197*
Personal Self r = .8471*	Self Satisfaction r = .8348*
Family Self r = .9426*	Behavior r = .8382*
Social Self r = .8892	Total (Self-Esteem) r = .9079*

*p < .001

of being more sport-oriented. The TSCS items lacked sport-specific content therefore the self-report questionnaires were supplemented. In addition, the response format of the questionnaires was open-ended, thereby permitting more freedom of response. However, this advantage in terms of freedom of response is a disadvantage in terms of objective scoring. Where no numerical data was generated in which statistics could be applied, a qualitative analysis of the answers was conducted to examine the themes of self-esteem, identity and athletic retirement. During the interview sessions of the study, each subject was given a self-report questionnaire to be completed in between the administration of the two TSCS tests. The questionnaires were tested in a pilot study (n = 8) after which certain items on the self-report questionnaire were refined. this was done through a discussion with the examinees concerning the appropriateness of the questions in view of the study purpose.

C. Treatment of Data

(1) The first analysis was an intergroup comparison of the mean identity and self-esteem scores for competitive and retired athlete groups. This was accomplished by using an independent samples "t" test (ANOVA) to assess the difference between groups on the two major variables in this study.

(2) Zero-order inter-correlation, which describe

the strength of the relationship between two variables, was performed for the identity and self-esteem scores with "time since retirement" for the retired group and "time since achieving a national ranking" for the competitive group. This was done to assess the relationship between identity and self-esteem with respect to the length of time individuals had been removed from active competition and the length of time each person maintained a level of high performance.

(3) The third analysis involved the retirement group only, in which the group was subdivided into 2 groups according to present involvement in their sport (whether coaching, for example, or not involved in any capacity). Again the dependent variables were TSCS identity and self-esteem scores. An ANOVA for unbalanced designs was used to determine if self-esteem and identity were higher or lower for those who completely dissociated themselves from their sport as opposed to those who were still involved.

The second part of the analysis of the data involved the self-report questionnaires given to each person between the pre-and post-test administrations of the TSCS. This was a non-statistical analysis that calculated the percentage of responses according to the sample size. For example, in the retired female group, if a particular question received 18 responses where 15 were yes and 3 were no, the value would

be 83% for the yes response and 17% for the no response. The purpose of this analysis was to allow athletes to report experiences related to their sporting career that were not examined by the TSCS.

E. Design Summary

(1) The study was conducted as a cross-sectional, not a longitudinal investigation. To compensate, a large number of both retired and competitive athletes were interviewed to determine if trends existed that distinguished the two groups as well as their global self-concept.

(2) The sample size in this study was n = 72 with a sub-group of 34 competitive athletes and 38 retired athletes. (Appendix A)

(3) Between the administration of both the pre- and post-tests of the TSCS, two separate questionnaires, designed by the interviewer, were administered to the respondents. One was given to the retired athletes and the other to the competitive athletes. The objective of the questionnaire was to gather specific information regarding either experiences and feelings during the transition from athletes to ex-athletes, or about preparation and feelings for future retirement.

The interview was designed in a semistructured fashion, therefore, having the advantage of being reasonably objective while still permitting a more thorough

understanding of the respondents' opinions and the reasons behind them.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

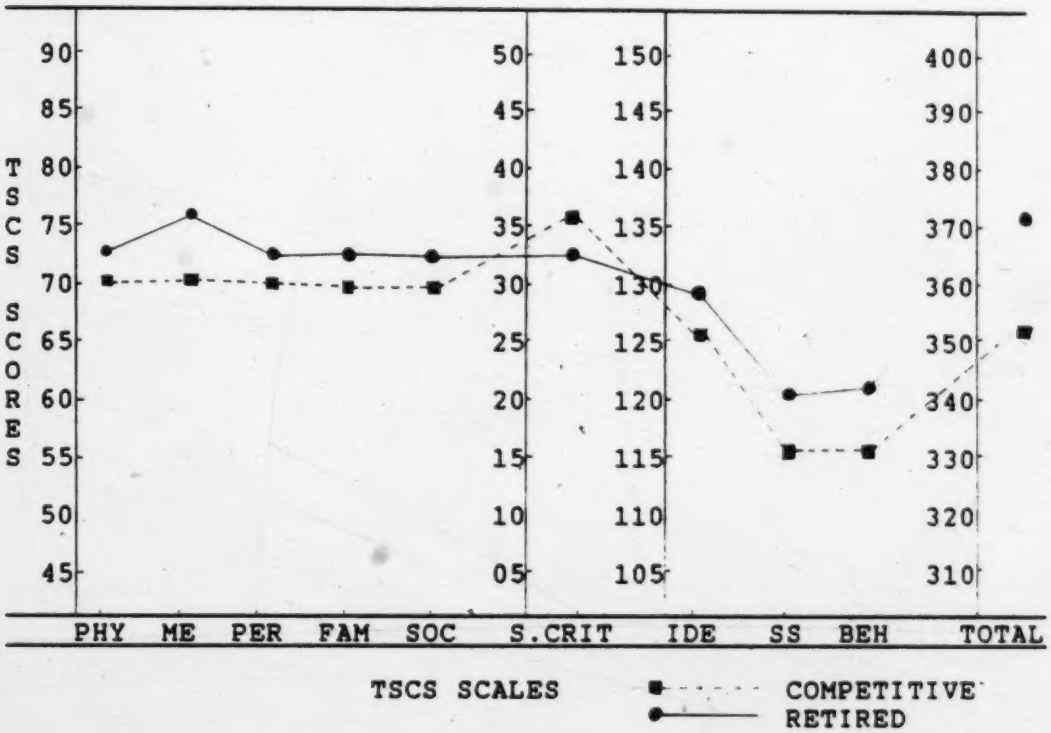
A. Athlete Status Differences

In the first set of analyses, t-tests revealed that retired and competitive athletes differed significantly in their Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS) scores. In the comparison of TSCS scores, retired athletes were found to score significantly higher on Moral/Ethical (M = 75.05,SD = 5.10 versus M = 70.55,SD = 7.96), Identity (M = 129.42,SD = 8.83 versus M = 125.71,SD = 9.75), Behavior (M = 120.90,SD = 10.80 versus M = 114.03,SD = 12.45), and Total Score (Self-Esteem) (M = 370.82,SD 24.95 versus M = 355.89,SD = 35.10). Figure 1 graphically illustrates test differences between groups, while Table II displays the means and standard deviations. Despite statistically significant differences in only four categories, Table II reveals that the retired group scored higher in all categories (with the exception of self criticism) when directly compared to the competitive group.

Zero-order inter-correlations were performed for each identity and self-esteem score with "time since achieving

FIGURE 1

TSCS mean profiles for competitive and retired athletes.



Competitive n = 34, Retired n = 38. T-test used in ANOVA.

TABLE II

Means and Standard Deviations of the Scores from the Tennessee Self Concept Scale

VARIABLE	RETIRED (n=38)		COMPETITIVE (n=34)		
	X	S.D	X	S.D	t
Physical Self	73.82	5.92	71.63	7.88	-1.35
Moral-Ethical	75.05	5.10	70.55	7.96	-2.91
Personal	73.47	6.43	70.63	7.66	-1.72
Family	74.03	8.30	70.75	10.18	-1.52
Social	74.45	7.32	72.23	8.49	-1.17
Critical Self	33.87	5.76	35.55	6.06	1.21
Identity	129.42	8.83	125.71	9.75	-1.70
S. Satisfaction	120.40	10.80	116.14	15.46	-1.37
Behavior	120.90	9.98	114.03	12.45	-2.61
Total P. Score	370.82	24.95	355.89	35.10	-2.11

national ranking" for competitive athletes only. The results indicated that there were no significant correlations at the $p < .05$ level. The same procedure was performed for the retired athletes but with "time since retirement" as the second variable. There was a significant correlation for time with self-esteem using pre-test scores ($r = .28$, $p < .05$). Relevant information is found in Tables II and III.

An analysis of variance for unbalanced designs was performed on the retired group only, to examine the effects of involvement in sport after retirement. Previous research indicated that when athletes retire, they lose their established roles and purposes in life, therefore causing a decrease in their level of identity and self-esteem (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). Once they establish a new purpose, their levels should return to their original level (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). It was from this assumption that the test rationale was established. If retired athletes remain active in their sport, their identity as athletes may still be a valid measurement of their self-esteem. Results, however, indicated no significant difference in identity and self-esteem scores between those who still played an active role in their sport and those who dropped out completely.

All of the tests that were performed included gender as a variable. There were no significant differences between males and females in any of the comparisons.

Table III

Summary of Zero-Order Correlations for Competitive Athletes: Time Since Achieving a National Ranking versus (a) Identity and (b) Self-Esteem

Identity vs. Time Since National Ranking (n=34)	
Correlation (r)	.08
Self-Esteem vs. Time Since National Ranking (n=34)	
Correlation (r)	.03

Table IV

Summary of Zero-Order Correlations for Retired Athletes: Time Since Retirement versus (a) Identity and (b) Self-Esteem

Identity vs. Time Since Retirement (n=38)	
Correlation (r)	.11
Self-Esteem vs. Time Since Retirement (n=38)	
Correlation (r)	.29*

*$p < .05$

In summary, the retired athletes consistently displayed higher mean scores on the TSCS when compared to the competitive group. There were no significant correlations for the competitive athletes when identity and self-esteem scores were compared with "time since achieving national ranking", but when the same test was performed for the retired athletes (with "time since retirement"), there were significant correlations between time and self-esteem. Finally, an ANOVA was performed for the retired group examining self-esteem and identity versus involvement in sport after retirement which resulted in no significant differences.

B. Self-Report Questionnaires

The second set of data from these two groups was gathered by a self-report questionnaire. The results were tabulated on a percentage basis depending upon the number of responses of the particular question. For example, for the question, "Would you describe the period of your life directly after retirement good or bad? Why?" the responses were as follows: 9 out of 20 responded good (45%), 8 out of 20 responded bad (40%) and 3 out of 20 stated both good and bad (15%). Of the group, 18 out of 20, with encouragement for elaboration, gave an informative response, and 2 out of 20 replied only good or bad. The retired and competitive

groups were sub-divided according to sex and results were recorded separately.

In the category of competitive males (n = 18), results are highlighted as follows (summarized in Appendix A): (1) 44% thought of themselves first and foremost as an athlete, (2) 89% wanted to remain competitive for many more years, (3) 78% thought of retirement with fear or dread, (4) 72% knew what they would do if they had to suddenly retire, whereas 28% had no idea what they would do, (5) 78% stated that their self-esteem fluctuated (between high and low) with their performance results, (6) 61% said that they would not feel as good about themselves if they were to retire, (7) 61% said that their top priority in their life was sport, and (8) 94% reported that they had something or someone else important in their life while they were competitive.

The second group, comprised of female competitive athletes (n = 16), reported as follows (summarized in Appendix A): (1) 44% described themselves first and foremost as an athlete, (2) 94% wanted to remain competitive in their sport for years to come, (3) 94% tended to be overall more realistic about their future, (4) 75% knew what they would do with their life if retirement was sudden, (5) 56% reported that their self-esteem fluctuated (between high and low) with their performance results, (6) 44% stated that they did not think they would feel as good about themselves

immediately upon retirement, (7) 50% said that their sport was their top priority in their life, and (8) 88% said that they had something or someone else important in their life other than their sport.

The third group, comprised of retired male athletes (n = 20), reported as follows (summarized in Appendix A): (1) 45% reported that an injury was involved in their decision to retire, (2) 40% stated that they felt less of a person upon retirement, (3) 55% said that they felt better at the time of the interview than when they were competitive athletes, (4) only 20% considered themselves, at some time or another, a "nobody" and only 10% considered themselves a "failure", (5) 80% had considered returning to competition yet only 15% reported that they were happier as athletes, (6) 50% stated that their feelings about themselves had improved since their days as competitors and 45% said that their feelings about themselves had improved since their initial retirement, (7) 60% reported that their self-esteem had fluctuated (between high and low) with their performance results, and (8) 30% of the athletes had been financially assisted by the national government however, not one was financially assisted upon retirement, and only 10% of the entire group received any psychological counselling of any kind. Approximately 60% reported the feeling of being "dropped off

the end of the earth", with respect to their sport

environment. (9) 55% said that they were still involved in some capacity in their sport and again 55% said that they felt this made the transition from athlete to ex-athlete easier, (10) 45% felt that the period of time directly after retirement was negative, many questioned their self-worth or direction in their life, and finally (11) 75% stated that they had someone or something else important in their life while they were competing therefore making the transition easier.

The final group involved in the self-report questionnaire involved the retired female athletes (n = 18). The results were as follows (summarized in Appendix A): (1) While only 28% said that an injury was involved in their final decision to retire, 44% of the respondents included lack of motivation and 56% included other opportunities as their reasons for their ultimate decision to retire, (2) 33% reported feeling less of a person upon retirement and again 33% said that they did not feel better about themselves now as they did when they were competitive. (3) 22% felt that they were a "nobody" at some point after their retirement yet not one saw themselves as a "failure" at the time of the interview, (4) although 61% said that they had considered returning to competition, only 22% said that they were happier as athletes. (5) 50% reported improved feelings about themselves since their competitive days and 61% stated that their feelings about themselves had improved since

initially retiring, (6) 72% said that their self-esteem fluctuated (between high and low) with their performance results, and (7) although 61% reported being financially assisted by the national government at one time in their careers, only 5% received any financial support and only 5% received any psychological counselling upon retirement. (8) 66% reported being involved, at the time of the interview, in some capacity in their sport yet only 39% felt that this made the transition any easier, (9) 44% stated that the time directly after their retirement had been bad, and finally (10) 78% said that they had something or someone important in their life other than sport during their competitive career.

C. Discussion (Tennessee Self Concept Scale)

The results of the comparison of TSCS scores between the retired and competitive groups support only part of the previous research (Curtis & Ennis, 1988; Coakley, 1983), and contradict others (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981; Werthner & Orlick, 1981). The latter propose that athletes lose their identity and their purpose in life upon retirement. However, higher scores in all areas of the TSCS, including socres of identity and (global) self-esteem, were characteristic of the retired group; therefore confirming the research of Coakley (1983), Curtis & Ennis (1988), allison & Meyer

(1984), as well as Blinde & Greendorfer (1985). These results could be attributed to the constant judgmental atmosphere competitive athletes are subjected to. Not only are athletes constantly being compared to their previous performance, they are also compared to other athletes as well. Athletes possess a stable level of identity, self-esteem and self-concept which pertains to themselves as people, yet in such an evaluative atmosphere, their identity and self-esteem as an athlete is constantly being challenged and may tend to fluctuate (Coopersmith, 1967). Therefore, when athletes have done well or poorly, their confidence is high or low and in turn, their identity and self-esteem is high or low. Through retirement, athletes are able to remove themselves from this evaluative environment and begin to judge themselves as people, not just as athletes.

Other characteristics of a competitive atmosphere are that through time and experience, athletes learn that they control their performance results through extensive preparation and dedication. Upon retirement, this philosophy carries over into their everyday life to help them become a success in other areas. As well, many retired athletes recognize that they possessed a talent that, although it was the norm in their sport, in the outside world, it is considered a rare virtue. These observations may be attributed to the higher scores of the retired group on the TSCS in comparison to their competitive counterparts.

In summary, some previous research (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981; Werthner & Orlick, 1981), concluded that competitive athletes maintained high levels of identity and self-esteem due to their success as elite performers. A psychological and physical "down" period exists for some athletes upon retirement because they lose this role, and as a result, experience a drop in identity and self-esteem (Botterill, 1981; Werthner & Orlick, 1981, van Oosten, 1985). However, although athletes may experience confusion and lack of direction for future plans upon retirement, this study has determined that it is not their overall identity, self-esteem or (global) self-concept that is being lowered. This is supported by much of the more recent literature, such as Blinde & Greendorfer (1985), Coakley (1983), Allison & Meyer (1984), and Curtis & Ennis (1988). Research literature indicates that indivisulas' self-concept is stable and fairly resistent to change (Battle, 1981). Although there may be a fluctuation of conficence and self-esteem, once incividuals' find an interest in something new, their identity will be redefined therefore, stabilizing their self-esteem (Santrock, 1988). Results of this study indicated that all the scores (with the exception of self-criticism) for retired athletes were consistently higher score than for competitive athletes (or more stabilized)..

The second set of analyses (zero-order inter-correlation), deals with competitive athletes' "time since

achieving a national ranking" in relation to levels of identity and self-esteem. Previous research (Erikson, 1968) indicated that individuals' identity developed through a subjective process in which they attempted to be productive and purposeful members of society (Santrock, 1988). Likewise, self-esteem was significantly associated with personal satisfaction and effective functioning (Coopersmith, 1967). Therefore, it would stand to reason that if athletes' young lives were dominated by dedication to their sport, their identity and self-esteem would be associated with being a successful athlete. The longer individuals maintained successful careers, the more likely their identity and self-esteem would be attributed to that role. What this investigation indicated however, was that there was no significant correlation between "time since ranking" and identity and self-esteem scores. Like the previous analyses, it is proposed that competitive athletes are constantly being compared to their last performance or to other promising athletes. As stated, it is difficult to raise one's identity and self-esteem when the pressure to perform is continually increased, therefore it would be less likely to see an increase over time. Those athletes that have been nationally ranked for a longer period of time must be constantly proving themselves to others whereas newly ranked athletes have less to prove. In other words, there are fewer expectations on the new athletes than the older

more established athletes. Likewise, individuals' athletic self-esteem may have reached a plateau in which the length of time since achieving a ranking is irrelevant, therefore there would be no increase in the scores over time. In other words, levels scored on the TSCS for the older, more established competitive athletes may be the same as when they were younger.

In summary, the previous research indicated that through time, elite level athletes developed a strong relationship between their success as an athlete and their identity and self-esteem (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). Therefore, the longer the athletes were successful, the higher their identity and self-esteem scores would be. This investigation, however, indicated that there was little correlation between length of time at a high level, identity and self-esteem.

The third set of analysis (also zero-order inter-correlation), was performed on the retired athletes in which the identity and self-esteem scores of the group were compared with "time since retirement". Previous research indicated that upon retirement, athletes' identity and self-esteem decreased, however, once individuals established new purposes in life, a new identity and self-esteem would emerge (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981; Werthner & Orlick, 1981; McLaughlin, 1981, Santrock, 1988). Without establishing a new purpose in life, it is unlikely a recovery both in

identity and self-esteem would occur. Significantly lower scores for both identity and self-esteem in newly retired athletes and a trend of increasing scores with the passing of time would therefore be expected. The results partly confirmed this assumption by revealing that there was a significant correlation between time since retirement and self-esteem, in that self-esteem increased as time since retirement increased. It is therefore assumed that as people experience a variety of successes in other areas over time, their (global) self-esteem increases such as the completion of their education or a lucrative occupation. The nature of this study, unfortunately, did not allow for the scoring of the athletes' self-esteem prior to retirement nor at various times throughout their retirement. It was therefore impossible to establish whether their self-esteem actually increased or remained at a level of stability calculated at the time of the interview.

To summarize, a zero-order inter-correlation performed on the retired athletes between time since retirement and identity and self-esteem scores indicated that there was a significant correlation between time elapsed since retirement and self-esteem. That is, as time increased, the self-esteem of retired athletes also increased. Although this was interpreted from the responses within the self-report, it is suggested that in a follow up study, a directed question at identifying individuals' success be included.

A possible explanation for this result is that as people experience more success in their lives, their confidence increases and, in turn, so does their self-esteem.

The fourth analysis required sub-dividing the original retired group (n = 38) into 2 smaller groups, depending on whether or not the retired athletes maintained an active role in their sport. Previous research indicated upon retirement, athletes would lose their purpose in life which in turn caused a decrease in their identity and self-esteem until establishing a new purpose or role, which would then raise their levels to their original state. It was therefore hypothesized that by maintaining a role, such as a volunteer or coach, in the sport other than as competitive athletes, retired athletes would not lose their "athletic" purpose in life. An ANOVA was performed resulting in no significant difference in identity and self-esteem scores between those who maintained an active role in sport after retirement and those who left the sport completely. Possible explanation for this result is that most athletes, upon retirement, move on to something else of importance, perhaps starting a family, a new job or going back to school. In the self-reports, most interviewed stated that they did have something else of importance in their life while they were competitive and this carried over into their life after sport. Remaining active in some other capacity in their sport, unless it was a paying job, was definitely

at the lower end of their priorities and there- fore had little or no effect on their levels of identity and self-esteem. As a result, there was no significant difference between the groups on levels of identity and self-esteem.

In summary, an ANOVA was performed on the retired group to determine whether remaining active in their sport after retirement resulted in higher levels of identity and self-esteem scores than for those who left the sport completely. The results of this analysis concluded that there was no difference in identity and self-esteem scores between the two groups. A possible explanation is that upon retirement, athletes become involved in other important goals, therefore, their athletic self-esteem and identity no longer play a role in their level of self-worth. If they choose to keep active in their sport, it plays a much less important role in their life or at least, it takes on a different meaning.

There were no significant differences between the two sexes for either the retired or the competitive groups. This conclusion resulted in all of the tests being completed without gender as a variable to determine if there existed any significant differences between the two original groups (retired and competitive athletes).

D. Discussion (Self-Report Questionnaires)

Both the retired and competitive groups were sub-

divided into 2 smaller groups according to sex. Beginning with the competitive male group (n = 18), 10 were national team members including 4 olympic team members. This group included 7 different sports and a competitive range of 4 to 16 years experience with 1 to 12 years experience on a national team or ranked in the top ten in Canada. Athletes were asked if they had ever temporarily retired. Only 33% (6/18) stated yes while 67% (12/18) said that they had considered retirement. This is important when examining the expected response to a preparatory phase prior to retirement, as it reveals that at least two thirds of the group acknowledged that retirement would be inevitable. Therefore, it would be expected that they would not feel the repercussions of an unexpected retirement (due to injury) as would athletes who never faced the fact that they would eventually have to retire.

Previous research stated that due to the total commitment required of elite performers, their identity would be developed through their successes as athletes (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). However, the self-report data revealed that only 44% (8/18) considered themselves first and foremost athletes. Deviating from the previous research results, this study concludes that athletic identity is something separate from people's overall identity and therefore, upon retirement, if they can replace the sport with an activity equal motivating and purposful, their

identity and self-esteem will return to it's original or even a higher level (Coopersmith, 1967). Therefore, for athletes who consider themselves to be first and foremost athletes, this does not guarantee that they would experience problems upon retirement, and by the responses of the retired athletes, an identity crisis is not very common.

Eighty-nine percent (18/19) of the athletes interviewed felt that they were better people for being athletes, based on their successes and dedication, and upon retirement would be able to see their sporting career as a beneficial experience. Confirming this positive outlook, 89% (16/18) of the competitive males expressed the wish to remain competitive in their sport for many more years. Only 22% (4/18) thought of their retirement with any sort of fear or apprehension. This, however, indicates there are some athletes who, if an injury were to suddenly halt their career, would probably suffer immensely from the repercussion. Also included in this group, 33% (6/18) had no idea what they would do if they had to stop their competitive career and 61% (11/18) reported they did not think they would feel as good about themselves upon retirement as they did as elite athletes. However, as determined from the results of the TSCS upon retirement, most athletes would in fact feel just as good about themselves, if not better (Allison & Meyer, 1984; Coakley, 1983).

Seventy-eight percent (14/18) felt that their self-esteem fluctuated with their performance results. This relates directly to the original hypothesis that athletes' self-esteem is highest when they consider themselves elite, whereas anything mediocre in their performances will quickly cause them to question their self-worth as an athlete. It should be pointed out that this is also completely consistent with the results of these tests. Although athletes may feel down after a poor performance and may question their past achievements, their overall identity and self-esteem as a person remains fairly stable (Coopersmith, 1967). In this case, the athletes regard themselves as poor athletes (according to their own standards) but still good people.

A surprising result was that even with elite level athletes, only 56% (10/18) considered sport their top priority in their lives and an encouraging 94% (17/18) said they had something else that was important in their lives other than their sport. As indicated with higher TSCS scores for retired athletes, these athletes will have something or someone to fall back on instead of being left with a complete void in their lives upon retirement.

Finally, although only 28% (5/18) offered further comments to the questionnaire, they did express the view that they would not be open to any discussion concerning plans for retirement during their competitive careers. This

may or may not represent a majority of the competitive athletes, but if it does, a preparatory phase (detraining) prior to retirement (Botterill, 1981), would probably fall on deaf ears. Other alternatives such as contacting athletes after the end of their career would make more sense. However most people involved in sport (coaches, teammates, sport psychologists and sport associations) are no longer interested in retired athletes as they tend to focus on the new elite performers.

In summary, the self-reports from the competitive males concluded that their accomplishments and dedication improved themselves as people and that they wished they could remain competitive for many more years. Although not a majority, some responses indicated that there is a potential problem with athletes who have no direction or purpose in their lives other than sport, supported by good transitional phases, as demonstrated by TSCS results of retired athletes. Most stated that they had something or someone of importance in their life other than sport. Most of the athletes reported that their self-esteem fluctuated with their performance results, although it is concluded that (global) self-esteem remains fairly stable. In general, results indicated that most would experience a successful transition from being successful athletes to being successful people in their life after sport. This trend is supported by both TSCS results indicating that successful transitions by most

retired athletes, as well as the more recent literature (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Hill & Lowe, 1984; Coakley, 1983).

The second group examined consisted of competitive female athletes (n = 16), in which 10 were national team members, including one Olympian and one world champion. This group included 4 different sports and a range of 2 to 12 years of competitive experience and one to 11 years experience on a national team and/or a top ten ranking in Canada. While only 13% (2/16) had temporarily retired at one point in their career, 69% (11/16) had considered retirement at one time or another. It is evident from this result that at least most of the athletes acknowledged that they would eventually have to face retirement.

Similar to the competitive males, 44% (7/16) considered themselves first and foremost athletes. Again, this deviates from some of the previous research (Botterill, 1981; Ogilvie & Howe, 1981), and is supported by others (Coakley, 1983; allison & Meyer, 1984). Upon retirement, if athletes are able to replace their sports activity with something of equal importance, they will experience a smooth transitional phase from athletes to ex-athletes. Athletes may feel a temporary loss of direction and purpose, but the identity of "athlete" can be replaced when their identity and self-esteem as worthy people remains fairly stable.

Only 56% (9/16) experienced some fluctuation of their

self-esteem with performance results, indicating that as a group, their identity was not strongly dependent on their performance results. Based on research findings (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985), the more stable the athletic identity, the smoother the transition upon retirement. This is again, supported by TSCS results. Surprising for a group of elite level athletes, only 50% (8/16) considered sport their top priority, and 88% (14/16) indicated that they had something or someone else important in their lives other than sport. This is a positive situation for athletes to be in if they are able to maintain their elite level performances. Unfortunately, most athletes must keep sport their main priority in order to achieve their goals and therefore, the transition from athletes to ex-athletes upon retirement is a difficult experience. For these people, having something to fall back on, such as an education, would definitely decrease the risk of negative experiences upon retirement, regardless of gender.

In summary, the self-reports from the competitive females were informative and offered direct insight into the perceptions of retirement from the competitive perspective. Overall, the athletes were realistic about their careers and maintained outside interests to avoid narrowing their vision too much. The most surprising result in this sub-group was that only 50% (8/16) considered sport to be their top priority. For a group of elite level athletes, they

maintained a good balance in their lives and would probably have relatively easy transitions when they made the final decision to retire. This trend is confirmed by the TSCS results of the retired group.

The third group involved retired male athletes (n = 20) in which 13 athletes were national team members, including 5 Olympians and 3 Commonwealth team members. The group were in 5 different sports and had a range of 4 to 25 years of competitive experience and one to twenty years of national team or top ten ranking experience. Although each athlete may have recorded more than one reason for their retirement, for 45% (9/20) of the athletes, injury played some role in their decision. The second most recorded response, 40% (8/20), was a lack of motivation to continue at such an intense level.

Forty percent (8/20)) reported feeling less of a person upon retirement, but as stated previously, it is the self-esteem related to being athletes that is affected and not the (global) self-esteem as worthy people. Therefore, the transition only lasts until retired athletes can find something else important to fill the void, during which they can maintain fairly high levels of overall identity and self-esteem level. Confirming this point, 55% (11/20) stated that they felt better about themselves at the time of the interview than they did competitive athletes. This is confirmed by the TSCS results of the retired group. This

illustrates that they have replaced their athletic identity and self-esteem with a more stable measure of self-worth. Seventy percent (14/20) said that they did not feel like a "nobody" around former teammates and 85% (17/20) did not consider themselves a "failure", even though the previous research indicated that this would be a common experience among recently retired elite athletes. Results like these are very positive with regards to how athletes are handling their retirement. They appear to be the same if not more confident in their abilities than when they were competitive. This supports the conclusion that it is difficult to raise one's self-esteem in an environment that is very judgmental and weighs self-worth on previous performance. However, even with this very positive situation, 80% (16/20) had seriously considered returning to their competitive days. Most felt that they had not achieved their competitive goals and wanted to prove something to themselves. Also, many missed the people involved, the competitions and the fitness level they once had. Even with this high number, 60% (12/20) stated that their self-esteem fluctuated with performance results and only 15% (3/20) felt that they were happier as athletes. Most likely, the memories are fonder than the actual time commitment and desire to return to an elite level.

Of this group which included 13 former national team members, 8 were financially supported by either the federal

or provincial government. Upon retirement, not one received any sort of financial aid and of the entire group, only 2 received any sort of psychological support from coaches, former teammates or sports psychologists. This is particularity sad to report, but the reality is that once athletes leave their sport, they are no longer useful and therefore forgotten. One athlete described it like "being dropped off the end of the earth". Perhaps this is part of the reason why some athletes experience doubt in their self-esteem, for people that were once so cherished by the sport, upon retirement, they are cast aside and quickly replaced. However, 55% (11/20) said that they were presently involved in some area in their sport, such as coaching and administration, and 55% (11/20) said that by staying involved, it had made their retirement easier. They were able to make the transition without losing touch with the activity that had brought them so much success in the past.

Forty percent (8/20) reported that the period directly after their retirement was a bad experience, but it was the lack of goals and purpose that made this a difficult time and upon finding a new activity, a more positive outlook was reported. Seventy-five percent of the athletes said that they were involved in something else of importance during their competitive days, which as previously mentioned, decreased the chances of experiencing a "down" period after retirement.

Finally, 17 former athletes offered some advice to other competitive athletes concerning retirement. Many said that it was important to set new goals and have other activities to fall back on when retirement finally happened. Others commented that it is important to be realistic about one's potential, to expect a lack of direction at the beginning, to take time to get an education and especially to talk to others about your feelings.

In summary, the retired male athletes were very positive about their lives after sport. This is directly supported by the TSCS reulsts of the retired group. Although some did experience some initial difficulty upon retirement, almost all of them reported being happier at the time of the interview than when they were athletes. Many felt that upon retirement, they were shunned from the world that they had gained so much success in. This is probably why so many athletes report feeling depressed upon retirement and if they still felt important to their former coaches and teammates, this problem would probably be significantly decreased. This, however, did not effect individuals' identity and/or self-concept. Most of all, athletes conveyed the importance of having something else in their life and upon retirement, getting involved in something to give some direction and goals.

The final analysis of self-report questionnaires involved the retired females (n = 18), in which 11 were

former national team members, including 2 Olympic medalists and 2 world champions. The group included 6 different sports with competitive experience ranging from 4 to 20 years and experience on a national team and/or top ten ranging from one to 14 years. When questioned about their reasons for leaving their sport, 56% (10/18) of the responses indicated other opportunities outside sport, 44% (8/18) indicated a lack of motivation as their reasons and 28% (5/18) felt injury was the reason they retired.

Only 33% (6/18) stated that upon retirement, they felt less of a person than while they were competitive. Athletes who suffer from this perceived decrease in self-worth still think of themselves as athletes who are finished, not as people who are accomplished and have potential and opportunities in other activities. Those who felt good about themselves at the time of their retirement were probably ready to move on to something new and had already established goals in that direction. Sixty-one percent (11/18) said that they felt either the same or better about themselves at the time of the interview than they did as athletes. Only 22% (4/18) stated they felt like a "nobody" upon retirement, although another 17% said that they felt they had lost their identity. Once they find a purpose to fill the void, their perception of themselves will increase. Seventy-two percent (13/18) had no problems being around former teammates and, encouragingly, none of the athletes

felt that they were a failure. All were able to see the value of what they had accomplished and even if they were not yet as successful in their present activity, they were able to reflect back on their sport accomplishments.

Sixty-one percent of the athletes had seriously considered returning to competition to either pursue unachieved goals, to retain their former fitness level, to prove something to themselves or because they missed the people. Any number of reasons could make retired athletes want to return to competitive life even though results of this study showed, both in TSCS results and questionnaires, that in general, they appear to feel better about themselves and are happier than when they were competing. To further support this claim, 72% (13/18) stated that they were either the same or less happier as an athlete, 50% (9/18) said that their feelings about themselves had improved since their competitive days, and 66% (12/18) stated that their feelings about themselves had improved since their initial retirement. As athletes, 72% (13/18) said that their self-esteem fluctuated with their performance results. Again, this appears to be caused by the nature of elite sport in that athletes are only as good as their previous performance and that they are constantly being compared to other athletes.

Of the 18 athletes in this group, 11 were at some point financially supported at some point by the government during

their career, however, only one athlete received financial support and only one received any psychological support upon retirement. This appeared to upset many of the athletes as they felt that once they retired, people no longer cared what happened to them. This is especially difficult if the athletes were at one time, popular and successful in their sport.

Sixty-six percent (12/18) reported still being involved in some capacity in their sport, such as volunteering or coaching and 39% (7/18) said that they felt this involvement made their transition from athletes to ex-athletes much easier. Remaining affiliated with their sport after retirement may help athletes maintain some of their status as former elite performers because other people involved still remember the athletes' success. Those who choose to leave the sport completely, enter a world where their success as athletes do not matter. Although the latter may be more difficult initially, this allows these people to put their energies into being a success in a new area, such as a career, and this is probably more beneficial in the long run.

Forty-five percent (10/18) said that the time period directly after their retirement was either the same or better than when they were competitive athletes. Reasons for these successful transitions appear to be whether or not the retired athletes had some other activity to give them

purpose and self-worth. Supporting this view, 78% reported that they had something or someone else important to them other than their sport. When asked to offer suggestions to competitive athletes concerning retirement, 44% (8/18) insisted that having other activities and goals were important as well as not neglecting to prepare for their future upon retirement.

In summary, of the retired female athletes, most appeared to have had a relatively smooth transition from athletes to ex-athletes upon retirement due to the fact that they had maintained other interests while competitive and had other goals to pursue upon leaving their sport. This was supported by the higher TSCS results of the retired athletes. Those who did encounter difficulty did not have these new purposes and therefore still considered themselves as "finished" athletes or as "has beens" instead of people who had accomplished goals in one area and were now moving on to another. Receiving no follow up support upon retirement left many, regardless of the sport, with the impression that no one cared about them anymore. If those involved took the time to help these athletes make a successful transition and keep in touch, perhaps these negative experiences would be minimized in the future.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships between identity, self-esteem and (global) self-concept of retiring elite level amateur athletes. The subjects included 34 competitive (18 males and 16 females) and 38 retired athletes (20 males and 18 females) who had achieved a position on a national team and/or were ranked among the top ten in Canada at some point in their competitive career. Each interview required the completion of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) pre-test, followed by the self-report questionnaire (competitive and retired questionnaires were given according to the status of the athlete at the time of the interview), and finally the TSCS post-test. Interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee was limited to unstructured clarification and expansion of self-report questions. The results for the TSCS were tabulated according to the TSCS manual (Fitts, 1965), while the scoring of the self-reports were done as a percentage according to the number of respondents answering positively or negatively to the question.

B. Conclusions

Based on the findings and within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions are made:

(1) Retirement from elite level sport need not mean a questionable identity nor a decrease in self-esteem during the transition from elite athlete to ex-athlete.

(2) Involvement in areas of personal importance, other than sport, during a competitive career and upon retirement is an important factor in predicting individuals' ability to cope with the transition phase from elite athletes to ex-athletes.

(3) Individuals maintain a fairly stable overall level of identity, self-esteem and self-concept. In addition, competitive athletes' identity and self-esteem, based on their previous performances, are essentially based on comparisons to other athletes and their overall physical abilities, have a tendency to fluctuate with good and bad results.

(4) Upon retirement, individuals' identity, self-esteem and global self-concept as a person become the focal point for self-evaluation, not as athletes. Therefore, performances as elite athletes no longer is the main vehicle for self-evaluation.

(5) The amount of time since achieving a national ranking or retirement from elite level sport does not appear to have any effect on retired athletes' identity and self-esteem.

(6) Maintaining an active role in sport after retirement (ie. coaching, officiating or administration) does not appear to have any effect on the identity and self-esteem of people who leave their sport completely after retirement.

(9) Based on the results from the self-reports, both competitive and retired athletes maintained a fairly realistic view of their athletic abilities and potential. Most competitive athletes had interests in areas outside of their sport and retired athletes quickly redirected themselves into different activities after their retirement.

C. Implications, Problems, and Suggestions for Future Research

The results of the present study focused on the relationship between identity, self-esteem, self-concept and retiring elite level amateur athletes. The evidence indicated that retired athletes tend to have significantly higher levels of identity, self-esteem and global self-concept than do competitive athletes. This may be a result of the retired athletes becoming involved in something that they can find just as motivating and rewarding as was their sport. In addition, they no longer contend with constant self-evaluation, based on their own and others' physical performances. Athletes, coaches, and sport psychologists should be aware that athletes who maintain outside interests during their competitive careers are not taking away from

their performances but are keeping a realistic view towards their athletic careers and at the end will be more successful in the transition phase.

Problems with this study were encountered by using a cross-sectional as opposed to a longitudinal survey. The latter would interview the same athletes during their competitive career and into retirement, therefore establishing whether or not their identity and self-esteem actually increased or decreased during the transition phase. However, the obvious drawbacks to this method would be the loss of subjects during competitive careers and the unpredictable time frame this study would have to accommodate in order to follow a certain number of athletes throughout their careers and into retirement. Also, as indicated previously, one of the main causes of retirement is injury, which in many cases immediately halts athletic careers, and therefore, prediction of the length of a competitive career and the level attained is highly unlikely. This study, however, attempted to overcome the drawbacks of a cross-sectional survey by interviewing a large number of athletes who were at various times frames of their competitive careers and retirement. For future research however, it is suggested that an attempt to conduct a longitudinal study would verify the trends concluded in this research.

The use of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale was found

to be a fairly accurate scale of measurement for the study; however, the specificity of the questions for comparison of competitive and retired athletes was limited. On the other hand, the self-report, although specific to the retirement dilemma, did not have an accurate method of measurement and perhaps, should have been designed to accommodate a scoring method other than the percentage of answers. The combination of the above tests provided a complete picture of both the competitive and retired athletes.

This study has concluded that the area of identity and self-esteem is multi-dimensional in which various factors influence a person's self-perception. For example, individuals' childhood experiences, if negative, can hinder a very physically talented athlete who is unable to increase their self-esteem, regardless of their performances. This research attempted to quantitatively establish whether or not one's identity and self-esteem decreased upon retirement, as concluded in previous literature. To establish whether or not individuals' level of identity and self-esteem is due to the success of sport and/or the termination of a long-term career is difficult. However, the results of the various tests in this study did conclude that identity and self-esteem is dependant on worthy activities that one partakes in throughout their lifetime, sport or otherwise.

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APPENDIX A

RESULTS FROM THE SELF-REPORT QUESTIONNAIRES

Table V

Results from the Self-Report Questionnaire for Competitive Male Athletes

MALE
AGE RANGE: 20 - 30
AGE BREAKDOWN: 20 - 1; 21 - 4; 22 - 3; 23 - 4; 24 - 1; 26 - 2; 27 - 2; 30 - 1.
TOTAL: 18
ACCOMPLISHMENTS: national team members: 9
olympic team members: 4
national junior team members: 1

(1) sport: (a) track & field - 13
(b) triathlon - 1
(c) boxing - 1
(d) sailing - 1
(e) canoeing - 1
(f) weightlifting - 1

(2) length of competitive experience: range: 4 - 16 years

(3) national team or ranked top ten: range: -1 - 12 years

(4) temporarily retired?
yes: 6 / 33%
no: 13 / 72%

(5) considered retirement?
yes: 12 / 67%
no: 7 / 39%

(6) describe self:

1st:		2nd:	
athlete:	8 / 44%	athlete:	3 / 17%
student:	2 / 11%	student:	2 / 11%
friend:	2 / 11%		
success:	1 / 6%		

informative responses: 16 / 89%
noninformative responses: 2 / 11%

(7) better person for being an athlete?
yes: 16 / 89% better than others: 1 / 5%
no: 2 / 11% better for self: 9 / 50%

(8) desire to remain competitive for years?
yes: 16 / 89%
no: 2 / 11%

(9) think of retirement with fear or dread?
yes: 4 / 22%
no: 14 / 78%

(10) plans if retirement sudden?
yes: 13 / 72%
no: 6 / 33%
coaching: 1 / 5%
school: 4 / 22%
would have difficulty: 2 / 11%

(11) self-esteem fluctuates with performance results?
definitely yes: 14 / 78%
no: 4 / 22%

(12) feel as good about self if retired?
yes: 7 / 39%
no: 11 / 61%

(13) sport number one priority?
yes: 10 / 56%
no: 8 / 44%

(14) anything else important in life?
yes: 17 / 94%
no: 1 / 5%
school: 3
work: 1
relationships: 9

Further Comments:

-retirement planning good: 3 / 17%
-retirement planning not important to me: 4 / 22%
-wouldn't go any further than listening: 1 / 5%
-deal with it when it comes: 2 / 11%
-ignore anything about retirement: 1 / 5%

informative responses: 5 / 28%
no response: 13 / 72%

Table VI

Results from the Self-Report Questionnaire for Competitive Female Athletes

FEMALE
AGE RANGE: 17 - 29
AGE BREAKDOWN: 17 - 1; 18 - 1; 20 - 1; 21 - 2; 22 - 1; 23 - 2; 24 - 2; 25 - 2; 26 - 1; 27 - 1; 28 - 1; 29 - 1.
TOTAL: 16
ACCOMPLISHMENTS: national team: 9
olympic team: 1
world champion: 1
national junior team: 1

(1) sport: (a) track & field - 12
(b) kayaking - 2
(c) weightlifting - 1
(d) boardsailing - 1

(2) length of competitive experience: range: 2 - 12 years

(3) national team or ranked top ten: range: -1 - 11 years

(4) temporarily retired?
yes: 2 / 13%
no: 14 / 88%

(5) considered retirement?
yes: 11 / 69%
no: 5 / 31%

(6) describe self:

1st:		2nd:	
athlete:	7 / 44%	athlete:	2 / 13%
good:	2 / 13%	student:	3 / 19%
student:	2 / 13%	professional:	1 / 6%
determined:	2 / 13%		
professional:	1 / 6%		

informative responses: 15 / 94%
no response: 1 / 6%

(7) better person for being an athlete?
yes: 14 / 88% better than others: 1 / 6%
no: 2 / 13%

(8) desire to remain competitive for years?
yes: 15 / 94%
no: 1 / 6%

(9) think of retirement with fear or dread?
yes: 1 / 6%
no: 15 / 94%

(10) plans if retirement sudden?
yes: 12 / 75%
no: 1 / 6%
yes & no: 2 / 13%

(11) self-esteem fluctuates with performance results?
yes: 9 / 56%
no: 4 / 25%
somewhat: 3 / 19%

(12) feel as good about self if retired?
yes: 9 / 56%
no: 7 / 44%

(13) sport number one priority?
yes: 8 / 50%
no: 7 / 44%
yes & no: 1 / 6%

(14) anything else important in life?
yes: 14 / 88%
no: 1 / 6%
yes & no: 1 / 6%

Further Comments:

-have other things in life: 1 / 6%
-wouldn't listen to any detraining information: 3 / 19%
-don't want to address the topic of retirement: 1 / 6%

informative responses: 8 /50%
noninformative response: 1 / 6%
no response: 7 / 44%

Table VII

Results from the Self-Report Questionnaire for Retired Male Athletes

MALES
AGE RANGE: 20 - 46
AGE BREAKDOWN: 20 - 1; 22 - 1; 23 - 1; 24 - 2; 25 - 1;
26 - 5; 28 - 5; 29 - 1; 30 - 1; 45 - 1;
46 - 1.
TOTAL: 20
ACCOMPLISHMENTS: national team members: 13
olympic team members: 5
commonwealth team members: 3

(1) sport: (a) track & field - 12
(b) bobsleigh - 2
(c) weightlifting - 4
(d) skiing - 1
(e) canoeing - 2

(2) length of competitive experience: range: 4 - 25 years

(3) national team or ranked top ten: range: 1 - 20 years

(4) reasons for retirement?
(a) injury: 9 / 45%
(b) administration problems: 1 / 5%
(c) lack of time: 1 / 5%
(d) earned potential: 1 / 5%
(e) did not make national team: 2 / 10%
(f) pressure/ psychological problems: 1 / 5%
(g) school: 1 / 5%
(h) earn money: 1 / 5%
(i) lack of motivation: 8 / 40%
(j) age: 3 / 15%
(k) other problems: 1 / 5%

(5) time since retirement: range: -1 month - 16 years
-1 month = 1; 4 months = 1; 5 months = 2;
10 months = 1; 1 year = 3; 2 years = 3; 3 years = 3;
4 years = 1; 5 years = 2; 9 years = 1; 16 years = 1.

(6) feel less of a person upon retirement?
yes: 8 / 40%
no: 10 / 50%
same: 2 / 10%

(7) feel better about self now than as an athlete?
yes: 11 / 55%
no: 5 / 25%
same: 4 / 20%

(8) think of yourself as a "nobody"?
yes: 4 / 20%
no: 14 / 70%
less important: 2 / 10%
left out: 1 / 5%
loss of who I am: 1 / 5%

(9) feel worthy of being around former teammates etc.?
yes: 14 / 70%
no: 4 / 20%
yes & no: 2 / 10%

(10) consider self a failure now?
yes: 2 / 10%
no: 17 / 85%
yes & no: 1 / 5%

(11) wish to compete again?
yes: 12 / 60%
no: 1 / 5%
sometimes: 7 / 35%

(12) considered a return to competition? why?
yes: 16 / 80 %
no: 4 / 20%
(a) prove something to self: 2 / 10%
(b) miss the people: 3 / 15%
(c) achieve goals: 4 / 20%
(d) fitness: 1 / 5%
(e) if able to make olympic team: 1 / 5%
(f) for fun: 2 / 10%
(g) miss the competitions: 2 / 10%

informative responses: 16 / 80%
noninformative responses: 4 / 20%

(13) happier as an athlete?
yes: 3 / 15%
no: 11 / 55%
yes & no: 6 / 30%

(14) feelings improved about self since competitive days?
yes: 10 / 50%
no: 4 / 20%
same: 5 / 25%
different: 1 / 5%

(15) feelings improved about self since initial retirement?
definitely yes: 9 / 45%
no: 6 / 30%
same: 5 / 25%

(16) self-esteem fluctuated with performance results?
definitely yes: 12 / 60%
no: 5 / 25%
slightly: 1 / 5%
sometimes: 2 / 10%

(17) nationally carded? length of time (range): 2 - 7 years
yes: 6 / 30%
no: 11 / 55%
provincially: 2 / 10%
scholarship: 1 / 5%

(18) receive any financial support upon retirement?
yes: 0
no: 20 / 100%

(19) receive any psychological support upon retirement?
yes: 2 / 10%
no: 18 / 90%
sources of outside help: coach: 2
friends: 3
family: 3
comments: - wish I had
- I was dropped completely
- it was a very difficult time

(20) presently involved in another capacity in sport?
yes: 11 / 55%
no: 9 / 45%
sources of involvement: coach: 7
administration: 1
fun: 1
other: 4

informative responses: 17 / 85%
noninformative responses: 3 / 15%

(21) if involved, does it make retirement easier/more difficult?
easier: 11 / 55%
more difficult: 1 / 5%
not applicable: 4 / 20%
yes & no: 3 / 15%
different: 1 / 5%

informative responses: 15 / 75%
noninformative responses: 1 / 5%

(22) period after retirement good/bad? why?
good: 9 / 45%
bad: 8 / 40%
good & bad: 3 / 15%
reasons why: - something missing
- nothing to work hard for

informative responses: 18 / 90%
noninformative response: 2 / 10%

(23) involved in anything else important?
yes: 15 / 75%
no: 5 / 25%
sources of involvement: work: 5 / 25%
school: 7 / 35%
relationships: 3 / 15%

informative responses: 17 / 85%
noninformative responses: 3 / 15%

(24/25) recommendations?
- have other activities to fall back on: 8 / 40%
- keep active: 1 / 5%
- set new goals: 10 / 50%
- talk to others: 2 / 10%
- prepare/ detraining: 2 / 10%
- expect a lack of direction at first: 1 / 5%
- be realistic about your potential: 3 / 15%
- get an education: 2 / 10%

informative responses: 17 / 85%
no response: 3 / 15%

Table VIII

Results from the Self-Report Questionnaire for Retired Female Athletes

FEMALE
AGE RANGE: 22 - 33
AGE BREAKDOWN: 22 - 1; 23 - 1; 24 - 3; 26 - 1; 27 - 1;
28 - 2; 30 - 2; 31 - 1; 32 - 1; 33 - 2;
34 - 2.
TOTAL: 18
ACCOMPLISHMENTS: national team: 11
olympic team: 2
olympic medalist: 2
world champion: 2

(1) sport: (a) track & field: 9
(b) skiing: 1
(c) kayaking: 3
(d) canoeing: 3
(e) waterskiing: 1
(f) cycling: 1

(2) length of competitive experience: range: 4 - 20 years

(3) national team or ranked top ten: range: 1 - 14 years

(4) reasons for retirement:
(a) injury: 5 / 28%
(b) lack of motivation: 8 / 44%
(c) other opportunities: 10 / 56%
(d) lack of time: 2 / 11%
(e) achieved goals: 2 / 11%
(f) lack of confidence: 1 / 5%
(g) problems with administration: 2 / 11%
(h) not progressing: 1 / 5%
(i) no fun: 2 / 11%

(5) time since retirement: range: -1 month - 13 years
-1 month = 2; 1 month = 1; 5 months = 1; 8 months = 1;
1 year = 2; 2 years = 2; 4 years = 4; 5 years = 2;
7 years = 1; 8 years = 1; 13 years = 1.

(6) feel less of a person upon retirement?
yes: 6 / 33%
no: 12 / 67%
-feel pressure from others to continue: 1 / 5%
-felt no one was interested anymore: 2 / 11%

(7) feel better about self now than as athlete:
yes: 7 / 39%
no: 6 / 33%
same: 4 / 22%
sometimes: 1 / 5%

(8) think of yourself as a "nobody"?
yes: 4 / 22%
no: 10 / 56%
lost identity: 3 / 17%
felt a void: 1 / 5%

(9) feel worthy of being around former teammates etc.?
yes: 13 / 72%
no: 3 / 17%
yes & no: 2 / 11%

(10) consider self a failure now?
yes: 0
no: 17 / 94%
sometimes: 1 / 5%

(11) wish to compete again?
yes: 7 / 39%
no: 9 / 50%
sometimes: 2 / 11%

(12) considered a return to competition? why?
yes: 11 / 61%
no: 6 / 33%
(a) prove something to self: 3 / 17%
(b) miss the people involved: 3 / 17%
(c) to achieve goals: 4 / 22%
(d) fitness: 5 / 28%
(e) compete at masters level: 1 / 5%
(f) for fun: 4 / 22%

informative responses: 15 / 83%
noninformative responses: 3 / 17%

(13) happier as an athlete?
yes: 4 / 22%
no: 7 / 39%
same: 6 / 33%
sometimes: 1 / 5%

(14) feelings improved about self since competitive days?
yes: 9 / 50%
no: 3 / 17%
not applicable: 3 / 17%
different: 2 / 11%
same: 1 / 5%

(15) feelings improved about self since initial retirement?
yes: 11 / 61%
no: 2 / 11%
not applicable: 3 / 17%
same: 1 / 5%
different: 1 / 5%

(16) self-esteem fluctuated with performance results?
definitely yes: 13 / 72%
no: 0
sometimes: 2 / 11%
slightly: 2 / 11%
no response: 1 / 5%

(17) nationally carded? length of time (range): 1 - 12 years
yes: 11 / 61%
no: 6 / 33%
provincially carded: 1 / 5%

(18) receive any financial support upon retirement?
yes: 1 / 5%
no: 17 / 94%

(19) receive any psychological support upon retirement?
yes: 1 / 5%
no: 17 / 94%
sources of outside help: coach: 1
friends: 2
family: 5
pressure to continue: 2

(20) presently involved in another capacity in sport?
yes: 12 / 66%
no: 5 / 27%
sources of involvement: coach: 10
administration: 2
official, volunteer: 2
other: 2

informative responses: 15 / 83%
noninformative responses: 3 / 17%

(21) if involved, does it make retirement easier/more difficult?
easier: 7 / 39%
more difficult: 2 / 11%
not applicable: 8 / 44%
no response: 1 / 6%

informative responses: 14 / 78%
no response: 4 / 22%

(22) period after retirement good/bad? why?
good: 8 / 44%
bad: 6 / 33%
yes & no: 1 / 5%
same: 2 / 11%
not applicable: 1 / 5%
reasons why: new goals: 1 / 5%
pressure off: 1 / 5%
no direction: 1 / 5%
pressure to continue: 1 / 5%

informative responses: 17 / 94%
noninformative responses: 1 / 6%

(23) involved in anything else important?
yes: 14 / 78%
no: 4 / 22%
sources of involvement: work: 3 / 17%
school: 10 / 56%
relationships: 6 / 33%
other: 1 / 5%

informative responses: 16 / 89%
noninformative responses: 2 / 11%

(24/25) recommendations?
-decrease slowly: 1 / 5%
-have other goals: 8 / 44%
-know your realistic potential: 1 / 5%
-other activities: 5 / 28%
-don't neglect future: 4 / 22%
-realize retirement is inevitable: 1 / 5%
-get outside help,read,talk: 4 / 22%
-prepare: 2 / 11%
-don't let education suffer: 3 / 17%
-plan for retirement: 3 / 17%
-work on self-esteem: 1 / 5%
-have friends outside the sport: 3 / 17%
-get on with life: 1 / 5%
-stay involved with sport: 1 / 5%

informative responses: 17 / 94%
no response: 1 / 6%

APPENDIX B

TENNESSEE SELF-CONCEPT SCALE

QUESTIONNAIRE

TENNESSEE SELF CONCEPT SCALE

The statements in this inventory are to help you describe yourself as you see yourself. Please answer them as if you were describing yourself <u>to yourself</u>. Read each item carefully; then select one of the five responses below.

Don't skip any items. Answer each one. Circle the correct one.

Responses:

Completely False	Mostly False	Partly False and Partly True	Mostly True	Completely True
1	2	3	4	5

1. I have a healthy body. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I am an attractive person. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I consider myself a sloppy person. 1 2 3 4 5
19. I am a decent sort of person. 1 2 3 4 5
21. I am an honest person. 1 2 3 4 5
23. I am a bad person. 1 2 3 4 5
37. I am a cheerful person. 1 2 3 4 5
39. I am a calm and easy going person. 1 2 3 4 5
41. I am a nobody. 1 2 3 4 5
55. I have a family that would always help me in any kind of trouble. 1 2 3 4 5
57. I am a member of a happy family. 1 2 3 4 5

Completely False	Mostly False	Partly False and Partly True	Mostly True	Completely True
1	2	3	4	5

59. My friends have no confidence in me. 1 2 3 4 5

73. I am a friendly person. 1 2 3 4 5

75. I am popular with men. 1 2 3 4 5

77. I am not interested in what other people do. 1 2 3 4 5

91. I do not always tell the truth. 1 2 3 4 5

93. I get angry sometimes. 1 2 3 4 5

2. I like to look nice and neat all the time. 1 2 3 4 5

4. I am full of aches and pains. 1 2 3 4 5

6. I am a sick person. 1 2 3 4 5

20. I am a religious person. 1 2 3 4 5

22. I am a moral failure. 1 2 3 4 5

24. I am a morally weak person. 1 2 3 4 5

38. I have a lot of self-control. 1 2 3 4 5

40. I am a hateful person. 1 2 3 4 5

42. I am losing my mind. 1 2 3 4 5

56. I am an important person to my friends and family. 1 2 3 4 5

58. I am not loved by my family. 1 2 3 4 5

60. I feel that my family doesn't trust me. 1 2 3 4 5

74. I am popular with women. 1 2 3 4 5

76. I am mad at the whole world. 1 2 3 4 5

Completely False	Mostly False	Partly False and Partly True	Mostly True	Completely True
1	2	3	4	5

78. I am hard to be friendly with. 1 2 3 4 5

92. Once in a while I think of things too bad to talk about. 1 2 3 4 5

94. Sometimes when I am not feeling well I am cross. 1 2 3 4 5

7. I am neither too fat nor too thin. 1 2 3 4 5

9. I like my looks just the way they are. 1 2 3 4 5

11. I would like to change some parts of my body. 1 2 3 4 5

25. I am satisfied with my moral behaviour. 1 2 3 4 5

27. I am satisfied with my relationship with God. 1 2 3 4 5

29. I ought to go to church more. 1 2 3 4 5

43. I am satisfied to be just what I am. 1 2 3 4 5

45. I am just as nice as I should be. 1 2 3 4 5

47. I despise myself. 1 2 3 4 5

61. I am satisfied with my family relationships. 1 2 3 4 5

63. I understand my family as well as I should. 1 2 3 4 5

65. I should trust my family more. 1 2 3 4 5

79. I am as sociable as I want to be. 1 2 3 4 5

81. I try to please others but I don't overdo it. 1 2 3 4 5

Completely False	Mostly False	Partly False and Partly True	Mostly True	Completely True
1	2	3	4	5

83. I am no good at all from a social standpoint. 1 2 3 4 5

95. I do not like everyone I know. 1 2 3 4 5

97. Once in a while I laugh at a dirty joke. 1 2 3 4 5

8. I am neither too tall nor too short. 1 2 3 4 5

10. I don't feel as well as I should. 1 2 3 4 5

12. I should have more sex appeal. 1 2 3 4 5

26. I am as religious as I want to be. 1 2 3 4 5

28. I wish I could be more trustworthy. 1 2 3 4 5

30. I shouldn't tell so many lies. 1 2 3 4 5

44. I am as smart as I want to be. 1 2 3 4 5

46. I am not the person I would like to be. 1 2 3 4 5

48. I wish I didn't give up as easily as I do. 1 2 3 4 5

62. I treat my parents as well as I should. 1 2 3 4 5

(Use past tense if your parents are no longer living.)

64. I am too sensitive to things my family says. 1 2 3 4 5

66. I should love my family more. 1 2 3 4 5

80. I am satisfied with the way I treat other people.

1 2 3 4 5

82. I should be more polite to others. 1 2 3 4 5

84. I ought to get along better with other people.

1 2 3 4 5

96. I gossip a little at times. 1 2 3 4 5

98. At times I feel like swearing. 1 2 3 4 5

13. I take good care of myself physically. 1 2 3 4 5

Completely False	Mostly False	Partly False and Partly True	Mostly True	Completely True
1	2	3	4	5

15. I try to be careful about my appearance. 1 2 3 4 5

17. I often act like I am all thumbs. 1 2 3 4 5

31. I am true to my religion in my everyday life. 1 2 3 4 5

33. I try to change when I know I am doing things that are wrong. 1 2 3 4 5

35. I sometimes do very bad things. 1 2 3 4 5

49. I can always take care of myself in any situation. 1 2 3 4 5

51. I take the blame for things without getting mad. 1 2 3 4 5

53. I do things without thinking first. 1 2 3 4 5

67. I try to play fair with my friends and family. 1 2 3 4 5

69. I take a real interest in my family. 1 2 3 4 5

71. I give to my parents. 1 2 3 4 5
(Use past tense if parents are not living.)

85. I try to understand the other person's point of view. 1 2 3 4 5

87. I get along will with other people. 1 2 3 4 5

89. I do not forgive others easily. 1 2 3 4 5

99. I would rather win than lose in a game. 1 2 3 4 5

14. I feel good most of the time. 1 2 3 4 5

16. I do poorly in sports and games. 1 2 3 4 5

Completely False	Mostly False	Partly False and Partly True	Mostly True	Completely True
1	2	3	4	5

18. I am a poor sleeper. 1 2 3 4 5

32. I do what is right most of the time. 1 2 3 4 5

34. I sometimes use unfair means to get ahead. 1 2 3 4 5

36. I have trouble doing things that are right. 1 2 3 4 5

50. I solve my problems quite easily. 1 2 3 4 5

52. I change my mind alot. 1 2 3 4 5

54. I try to run away from my problems. 1 2 3 4 5

68. I do my share of work at home. 1 2 3 4 5

70. I quarrel with my family. 1 2 3 4 5

72. I do not act like my family thinks I should. 1 2 3 4 5

86. I see good points in all the people I meet. 1 2 3 4 5

88. I do not feel at ease with other people. 1 2 3 4 5

90. I find it hard to talk to strangers. 1 2 3 4 5

100. Once in a while I put off until tomorrow what I ought to do today. 1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX C

SELF-REPORT QUESTIONNAIRES

FOR COMPETITIVE AND RETIRED ATHLETES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMPETITIVE ATHLETES

Name: ..... Age: .....

(1) What sport do you presently compete in?

.....

(2) How long have you competed in your sport?

.....

(3) How long have you been competitive at an international level or ranked in the top ten in Canada?

.....

(4) Have you ever temporarily retired?

.....

(5) Have you ever considered retirement?

.....

(6) How would you describe yourself to someone? (eg.sister, student etc.)

.....

(7) Do you think that you are a better person because you are an athlete?

.....

(8) Do you wish that you could remain competitive for years to come?

.....

(9) Do you think about retirement with rear or dread?

.....

(10) If you were to retire tomorrow, do you know what you would do with your life?

.....

(11) Do you find that your feelings about yourself (your self-esteem) fluctuates with your performance results?

.....

(12) Would you feel as good about yourself now if you could no longer compete?

.....

(13) Would you say that your number one priority in your life is your sport?

.....

(14) Do you have any other important things or persons in life outside of your sport?

.....

Further Comments:

.....

.....

.....

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RETIRED ATHLETES

Name: ..... Age: .....

(1) What sport did you participate in?

.....

(2) How long were you competitive for?

.....

(3) How long were you competitive at an international level or ranked in the top ten in Canada?

.....

(4) What were your reasons for leaving your sport as a competitor?

.....

(5) How long ago did you retire?

.....

(6) Upon retirement, did you feel any less of a person than when you were competing?

.....

(7) Do you feel better about yourself now than when you were competing?

.....

(8) Upon retirement, did you at any time think of yourself as a "nobody"?

.....

(9) Upon retirement, did you feel that you were not"worthy" or being in the company of former teammates, coaches, and so forth?

.....

(10) Do you consider yourself a failure now that you are no longer on the national team or nationally ranked?

.....

(11) Do you often wish that you were back competing again?

.....

(12) Have you ever considered returning to competition again? If yes, reasons why?

.....

(13) Do you feel that you were happier as an athlete?

.....

(14) Have your feelings about yourself improved since your days as an athlete?

.....

(15) Have your feelings about yourself improved since your retirement?

.....

(16) Reflecting back on your competitive days, do you feel that your opinion of yourself (your self-esteem) fluctuated with your performance results?

.....

(17) Were you ever carded? if so, for how long?

.....

(18) Did you receive any psychological support upon retirement? (ie. counselling, advice, someone to talk to?)

.....

(19) Did you receive any financial support upon retirement?

.....

(20) Are you presently involved in some other capacity in your sport, in the form of coaching, administration, and so forth?

.....

(21) If you are presently involved, do you thing this made your retirement from sport easier or more difficult?

.....

(22) Would you say the period of your life directly after retirement was good or bad?

.....

(23) Were you involved in anything else that you considered important other that your sport?

.....

(24) What would you recommend to athletes who are presently experiencing retirement?

.....

(25) What would you recommend to athletes who are presently competitive and are not addressing the issue of retirement?

.....

Further Comments:

.....

.....

.....